2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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412
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415
133

(*a*) A large boulder in the middle of a settlement forms a natural mortar where young girls go to stamp guinea corn.

312
415
133
291

(*b*) Women at a waterhole in the early rainy season. This waterhole serves homesteads within a radius of over a quarter of a mile.

[facing p. 176]

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

deal with the conversion of these raw materials into cooked food for the maintenance of all by the almost exclusive efforts of the woman.

The preparation of food is a woman's task. Though cooking is done by both sexes, men cook only on ritual and special occasions and, as a rule, out of doors. Women always cook in the kitchen, as it is a taboo to prepare food for everyday consumption outside the compound. As we have already mentioned, every woman other than a young wife has her own quarters (*dug*) consisting of several rooms. Of these, the most important for the present paper are the grinding room (*neer*) and the kitchens (*da'ay*). Not every woman possesses her own grinding-room, but she may use that of any other woman in her husband's compound, or of a related neighbouring compound, and no one may refuse her. The owner's permission is never asked, but a woman will not enter a grinding-room if she observes another's grain lying on the grinding-platform.

The grinding-room is the source of much friction within the compound. It is the cause or pretext of women's quarrels which often involve their husbands as well. Disputes arise mainly over the question of priority, or about the misuse of the grinding stones, e.g. leaving the *baarig* soiled with soup ingredients. Hence, a man will try to build a grinding-room for each wife in order to maintain the peace.

Inside the grinding-room is a low, semicircular platform (*neer*) the surface of which has two or three shallow depressions with their appropriate grindstones (*neekay*). These vary in weight, shape, and texture according to the purpose for which they are intended. There is a heavy and rough grindstone—*gmaarig*—used for crushing the whole grain; a smaller and flatter one—*baarig*—which crushes the rough corn into fine flour (*zem*); and a small, round stone—*ziba'axneer*—used only for grinding soup ingredients such as dried vegetables, red pepper, rock-salt, dawa-dawa-seed balls, dried meat, &c. If a grinding-room lacks the latter stone the soup ingredients are mixed with a little flour and ground with the *baarig*. The flour is added so that the stone should be left clean and dry.

The kitchen consists of two adjoining rooms, a covered one (*da'ambɔk*) used during the wet season, which serves also as the store-room for the owner's produce, her firewood, and cooking-pots, and an open one (*da'ay*) used during the dry season. However, it happens

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

Plate II

778
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516

A small boy 'sacrificing' to his own 'shrine' (posed)

857
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244

Gleaning groundnuts, one of the ways of learning to use a hoe. The child on the extreme right is a girl

[facing p. 17]

7:Lynn G-5 (1932-1936) 1937 FE11 Tallensi FE11

Manuring.

241

It has already been mentioned that manuring forms a definite part of the farming system; there is scarcely a single compound which has not a compost heap of some kind in front of it, and everyone is familiar with the value, and the use, of manure. It is surprising, therefore, to find no great attention paid to either quality or quantity. Table 2, column 3, shows that 12% only of the total area cultivated received a dressing of manure in the year of survey. The manure (compost) consists of household sweepings, that is, the dung from livestock mixed with vegetable waste; but the amount of manure which is accumulated in this way is very small by comparison with the amount which could be made if a little more care was exercised in its preparation. Women and children carry the manure from the midden in baskets and put it on to the land in small heaps, just before, or just after, early millet is planted. From these heaps it is spread around at the next hoeing. The baskets hold from 4 to 15 lbs. and the heaps are made from 6′ to 8′ apart; this gives an average dressing of from 2 to 5 tons per acre. The yield figures (see Tables 3 and 4 below) leave no doubt as to the value of these small dressings of manure. Undesirable as it may be from a sanitation point of view, the vigorous growth of crops around compounds and near to markets, suggests that nightsoil plays no small part in the maintenance of soil fertility (a point which should be remembered when considering the provision of latrines: a septic tank used to compost vegetable waste is much to be preferred, where practicable, to pit latrines and incineration).

Implements.

412●

The agricultural implements used by a people are generally a good index to the standard of their agriculture. This is certainly true of the implements used by the people in North Mamprusi: they are very rudimentary and the standard of cultivation is low. The hoe, with which most of the work is done, consists of simple oblong-shaped iron blade, 7″ long and 5″ wide, slightly concave on its inner face. The middle of the top of the blade is drawn up into a ring, this is forced on to the tapered end of a short hooked stick which serves as a handle; the whole weighs under 2 lbs. The blade is set on to the handle at an angle of about 85°, and the hoe is used by working it towards the body. The handle is about 1½′-2′ long, made generally from "ginga" (Nankani) (Diospyros mespiliformis), or "gopelaga" (Acacia sieberriana). For chopping, or cultivation in particularly hard ground, an adze is used; this is made of heavier iron than the hoe, 1½″-3″ wide and 4″-6″ long,

7:Lynn G-5 (1932-1936) 1937 FE11 Tallensi FE11

412 mounted on a similar handle. Hoe-blades are now made from scrap iron, mainly parts of old motor cars and old railway sleepers; [177] a hoe is sold in the market for 2d. or 3d., which is well within the purchasing power of everyone. It is not many years, however, [326] since hoes were made from locally smelted iron; they were then not so easy to come by and some of the poorer farmers used hoes of hard wood.

241 The coarse nature of the soil enables a shallow cultivation to 134 be given effectively with these light implements after a fall of rain. When the ground is dry and hard, cultivation is very laborious and it is frequently neglected at a time when needed most. This is often the case early in the season when precarious rains make a soil-mulch desirable.

Preparation for Planting.

243 Two of the most important crops, early millet and guinea corn, are sown after the second big rain of the year, this is generally in the first week of April. The soil, which has been left untilled since the burn-over after the previous year's harvest, is very hard until humidity rises with the approaching rain, and there is very little time to do any preliminary cultivation. On the majority of farms the only preparation for sowing is to collect the remains of the previous season's crops into heaps and to burn, and sometimes to carry-out manure; very occasionally a little hoeing is done.

Planting Major Crops.

412 On the morning following the big planting rain the whole 241 countryside turns out to do one of its few really full day's work on the farm for the year. Men walk over the farm with stout sticks about 6′ long, cut from "tcheea" (Nankani) (Anoegeissus leiocarpus), or "gopelaga" (Nankani) (Acacia sieberriana), sharpened at the end to a flat point, resembling a narrow-bladed oar; or sometimes fitted with a worn hoe blade. With these sticks, holes are prodded at random 2′ 6″ to 3′ apart in the moist earth; 241 the soil being ejected with a twist of the wrists. Women and children follow the men with the seed of early millet and cowpeas mixed in a calabash. The calabash is held in the hand between the third and fourth fingers, and three to six seeds of early millet,